

# INFORMATION ABOUT:



A WYOMING BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

*“Unlimited Outdoor Adventure”*

the  
**“Wilderness”**



In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act. This established the National Wilderness Preservation System -- large roadless areas with natural values to be protected from surface disturbing activities such as logging, mining, and road building. This Act applied to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

With the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, the BLM was instructed to review the public lands for wilderness characteristics such as naturalness, size, solitude, and recreation opportunities. Through field inventory, 40 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) totaling about 575,000 acres were identi-

fied in Wyoming. The BLM studied these WSAs and made recommendations on which of the areas should be designated as wilderness. In 1992, the President submitted to Congress the BLM recommendation that all or portions of 20 WSAs (about 240,000 acres) are suitable for wilderness designation.

All WSAs, regardless of their recommendation, are being protected by BLM until Congress makes its wilderness decisions. The WSAs are being managed to ensure they are not impaired. In other words, the use must be temporary, it must not disturb the vegetation or soil to the point of requiring reclamation, and must not involve permanent placement of structures or installations. Any use or

activity that impairs a WSA (including those the BLM normally approves) is prohibited.

## **What recreational activities can the public do in a WSA?**

Most recreational activities (including camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, etc.) are allowed in WSAs. However, some activities are prohibited or restricted if they require permanent structures or if they depend on cross-country use of motor vehicles or other mechanical transportation.

## **Can motor vehicles and other mechanical transport be used in WSAs?**

Use of motor vehicles in a WSA depends on the vehicle designation given to the area in the Resource Management Plan (Land Use Plan). Motor vehicle designations for Wyoming WSAs are either “closed” or “limited to existing or designated roads or vehicle routes.” Mechanical transport such as mountain bikes are allowed on existing roads and two-tracks, but cross country travel is prohibited. Contact the local BLM office for specific information about a particular WSA.



## Can I cut firewood in a WSA?

Removal of firewood from the WSA for off-site use is not permitted. However, the gathering of dead and down wood from trees and brush is acceptable for use in low impact campfires within the WSA. The general rule is that standing trees, whether alive or dead, should not be cut.

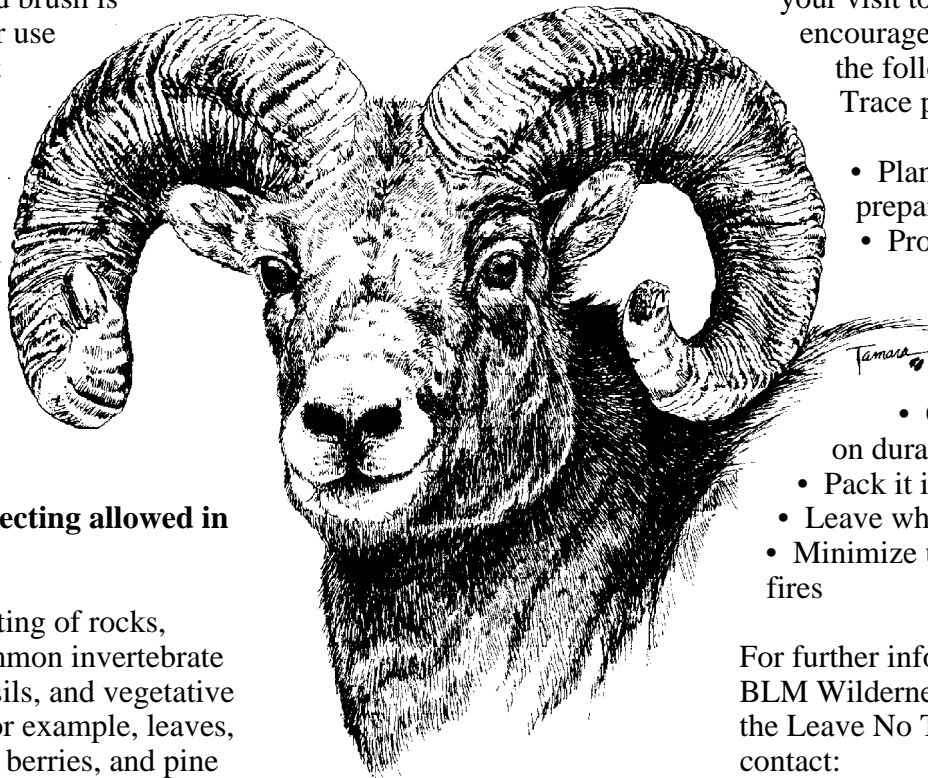
## Is hobby collecting allowed in WSAs?

Hobby collecting of rocks, minerals, common invertebrate and plant fossils, and vegetative specimens (for example, leaves, flowers, nuts, berries, and pine cones) may be carried out in reasonable amounts for personal (noncommercial) use, as long as the collection activity does not impair the WSA. Hobby collecting does not apply to archaeological and historical sites or structures and associated artifacts, which are protected by law.

## Are grazing, mining, and mineral leasing allowed in WSAs?

If these activities were authorized to take place on what are now WSA lands as of October 21, 1976, they are uses that are

permitted to occur in the WSA. These uses must be regulated to ensure that they do not cause unnecessary or undue degradation to the WSAs.



## What can I do to preserve wilderness values and naturalness?

1. Help prevent the spread of noxious weeds into WSAs. Use certified weed-free feed for livestock. Avoid hiking or driving through weed infestations. Clean weed seed from equipment, pets, livestock, etc. before bringing them into WSAs. If you find infestations, report them to the local BLM office as soon as possible.

2. Adopt Leave No Trace skills and ethics. So others may enjoy the beauty and solitude of our Wilderness Study Areas, please try to leave as little evidence as possible of your visit to these areas. We encourage you to practice the following Leave No Trace principles.

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Properly dispose of what you can't pack out (for example, human waste)
- Camp and travel on durable surfaces
- Pack it in...pack it out
- Leave what you find
- Minimize use and impact of fires

For further information about BLM Wilderness Study Areas or the Leave No Trace program, contact:

Bureau of Land Management  
P.O. Box 1828  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
(307) 775-6256

Or, better yet, drop in to a local BLM office and get acquainted.

